

**Minutes of Meeting of Board of Trustees of
Westside Unitarian Universalist Congregation**

Jan 21, 2015

The meeting was held at the congregation's building on 7141 California Ave SW, Seattle, WA, and was called to order by Joe at 6:35 pm, followed by chalice lighting.

Present were President Joe Rettenmaier, VP Matt Aspin, Secretary Lisa Maynard, Treasurer Michael Matz, and Trustees Shannon Day and Glenn Phillips, as well as Rev. Peg Morgan. Trustee John Britt was in India. Members of Finance Committee and Stewardship Committee joined parts of the meeting.

Minutes

Moved, seconded, voted to approve the Dec 2014 minutes as amended with Shannon's corrections.

ACTION: Lisa will put the approved minutes of previous months up on the website. (DONE!)

Treasurer's Report

Finance Committee members Ellen West, Joanne Cook, Eric Winiiecki, and Paula vanHaagen attended in part to urge us to take care of our current building (e.g., fixing leaks, repairing retaining wall) before we consider any improvements (e.g., ADA bathrooms, elevator). Deep concern about our liability situation if part of the parking lot were to collapse. We need to get a good estimate of the parking lot repair before we plan the capital campaign.

Cash flow: FC expressed concern that pledge income goes down in the second half of the fiscal year. What do we do when there is not enough cash in our operating fund? Is Board prepared to use Building Fund money to plug any short-term gaps?

FC would also like us to consider changing our fiscal year to start July 1. Benefit is that it gives us more time to do our fundraising and pledge drive and have a better picture of our revenues. Would also spread out the 'asks' between fundraising and pledge drive. We would need to prepare for it by drafting a change to the by-laws (perhaps the new format would be put in place a year from the approval in May).

We have a cash cushion now of \$12K (as of Dec 31, 2014). Since June we are up \$4K (started with \$8K cushion at beginning of fiscal year).

Suggestion that FC provide a monthly running summary of a projection of our revenues and expenses (to communicate to congregation). FC points out that funds flow in and out differently in different months and so it may alarm the congregation unnecessarily? Eric points out that last year we were in good shape until the last two months of the fiscal year. This just represents growing pains of the congregation, especially as we adjust to owning a building. 'Notes from Finance Committee Meeting 1/13/2015' are **appended** to these minutes.

ACTION: Michael and Peg will work together to give monthly expense/income info to FC, and then FC will review and pass (through Michael) to the Board.

ACTION: Michael and Peg will put together a really good report about income/expenses after the auction results are in.

Suggestion that the Board needs to shift its focus to revenue and vitality instead of this detailed focus on budget. Revenue is very closely tied to membership, so we need to figure out why we aren't growing as much as we anticipated. We have families and family activities but not much for young adults.

Dedicated fund balances: are there any that we could use these to close the gap even further? Most are going to remain as rotating funds and there isn't any way to reassign. There is \$11–12K in Memorial Donations (unrestricted). The remaining 'Raise the Paddle' money in the current year's budget is paying for the Storytime teacher. We have already moved what could be moved, for the most part. If we were to move Memorial Donations to Endowment/Planned Giving, then that money would be locked up. Consensus that we should not move Memorial Donations or set up an Endowment Fund until we have a more solid operating reserve and building reserves.

The Board thanks the FC very much for their excellent work and support. FC encourages Board to use our energy on addressing revenue and membership growth and let FC focus on financial details.

Stewardship Committee/Plan

Stewardship Chair Jill Fleming joined the meeting (FC stayed). Stewardship Comm (SC) has met three times since November. SC has a strong group of supporters either coming to meetings or advising, including Eileen Duffy, Viv and John Monahan, Mark Newton, Candy Sullivan, Ellen West, Mark Wainwright, Steve Burrows, and others. It has been three years since WSUU had a one-on-one pledge drive with personal stewardship calls. We may have as many as 100 members who have not had that experience in our congregation (or in any congregation). SC wants to provide the one-on-one experience.

The traditional Pledge Sunday will be March 22. Theme is 'building community one conversation at a time.' Also envision doing three pledge circles or conversation circles (small group setting to talk about pledging) in the week after Pledge Sunday (last week of March). It will be a soft sell, exploring interests. SC would like to have a Board member at each of those circles. If people come to the pledge circle they will still be assigned a steward to follow up. Idea is that people would pledge during their conversation with their steward. Pledging will still be available online. People can refuse a personal call but someone will be assigned.

Also there will be an Advanced Pledge Circle (prior to March 22) focused on people who have a pattern and history of commitment to WSUU. Stewards will all pledge with each other the week before March 22. Maybe next year will have a big pledge dinner (part of the challenge is that we've outgrown this

space). Need to think about for church calendar for next year. Intending to have results by around Apr 15. Joe asked Jill to write up a rough timeline.

Stewards will have pretty minimal info with them – not a detailed budget. Will have a pyramid showing that you need x households at this level, y households at that level. SC is strongly influenced by good materials from First Church in Portland and by a book called *Creating Congregations of Generous People*. Going back to a pretty classic approach.

SC is including a major focus on thanking people as there is some thought that we are experiencing some donor fatigue from combo of capital campaign and relatively large pledges from a few people.

Next SC meeting is Feb 18, same as Board.

Suggestion that we need to infuse services with joy and uplift. Jill has asked that we do volunteer recognition before the pledge drive. Celebrating and thanking people for all the work in the midst of the church year. Feb 1 will be a Sunday to recognize volunteer stewardship in the congregation. Peg welcomes all ideas. The Worship Council is meeting at 7 pm tomorrow.

Is there a way for us to capture all this learning from SC? For example, every new member should have a one-on-one canvass in the year after they join, no matter what kind of pledge drive we hold that year. We all remember our first one-on-one canvass meeting! Can we figure out a way to have each member receive (at least) one personal outreach every year?

Minister's Report

Peg sent her report in email on Jan 20 (**appended**).

Budget Development Timeline

By Feb 28, committees submit budget requests to FC (FC will contact the committees; has created a request form including account numbers, previously budgeted). Verbiage on the form says we anticipate a flatline budget this year.

Early March: FC meetings to put together budget (fixed costs are most important to understand).

March 15: Board receives flatline budget from FC.

Peg asks that FC use a personal touch with Landscape (Rose and Regina, can we get \$200 since they were zeroed out last year without a personal conversation) and Music Council (no sheet music \$ last year, again without a conversation).

Geotech Proposals

We reviewed Chris Rhinehart's recommendation on the bids and moved, seconded, voted to contract with GEO Group to evaluate the parking lot. The check for \$3500 to pay for the evaluation will come from Building Fund.

ACTION: Joe will tell Rose to let GEO Group that we want to do the first phase (\$3500).

Auction

Raise the Paddle: We made a risky decision to say at the auction that we are asking directly for money to fill the gap. Glenn came up with a great idea of building the 'raise the paddle' excitement around "I can tell your future, but what do you want your future to be?" "What do you love about us that you want to continue?" He had already rented a fortune teller costume for that night, so it fits in beautifully. Hoping to keep energy happy, we are building together. The auctioneer (Todd) is doing the ask. Glenn/Zoltar will have Joe as his straight man.

Shannon is intending for soundtrack to be French café/gypsy jazz. Also circus acrobats coming for transition from silent to live. Board is asked to arrive by 4:30 in costume to be vibrant for when guests start to arrive at 5.

Michael and Lisa will sell raffle tix to the Teatro Zinzanni (cash, Square for credit cards) after church on Sunday.

Thank You Notes

Soph Davenberry for hours of furnace repair (she was here four times for at least 3-4 hours each). Building Committee volunteers who investigated the leak in the vestibule (Rose, and ask her to pass on our appreciation to Dan Day, Rob Fenwick, Charlie Wilson).

ACTION: Next month, when Joe sends his agenda, he will remind us to write thank you notes in advance that we could sign.

Meeting adjourned at 8:57 pm.

MINISTER'S REPORT

Rev. Peg Morgan (submitted in email Jan 20, 2015)

Hello Board!

Just a few program news flashes.

The march was great...30-40 of us out in force. Some hate rhetoric from a NAACP man that I didn't appreciate...but other than that, good spirit and fun for all of us. Offering the Standing on the Side of Love T shirts turned out to be quite popular. I had 20 preorders but on an intuition, ordered 40. All sold. We also had loaners for folks of used shirts which worked out well for lower income people...an inclusive benefit.

We are serving the wider community through our relationship with Houghton-Kennedy Funeral Home...they referred a family on Monday who needed a space to rent on Wednesday for a memorial and they wanted me to officiate.

I am responding to the desire for more services for our elders by planning two workshops...one on the Death with Dignity law in WA State which will include info on that and time to fill out our own health care directives with a notary present to complete it right there. Secondly, I will do a workshop on Planning Your Own Memorial, a chance to consider the purposes of a memorial, and express some wishes about your own memorial, including favorite hymns, poems, etc. A form will be available to fill out and we will save it for your household file. The Common Quest brochure is coming out very soon.

The office is quite a buzz with Shannon working hard on aspects of the auction, IRS end of year stuff, and the normal stuff. Please go through your books and donate into the social hall (by coat racks) any time you are at church! We will also have a couple tables or more of special treasures...items a cut above rummage sale.

Not much else I want to report tonight...but to say that I think it is really really important that we give the congregation a clear projection on all the revenue items they approved for this year's budget. If we don't, they will rightly be upset should we come up short in another short 4 months. Transparency demands it. It can be a follow up to the mid year report, since it was asked for then. Perhaps you could all let Michael and I know if you have any thoughts about the projections I set forth in my document sent a few days ago, and delegate to Michael then to make final adjustments to that report and get it out.

Notes from Finance Committee Meeting 1/13/2015

We have concerns about our financial strength going forward.

Warning that it may be necessary to use the Building Fund to pay for Operations before the end of year.

Need income growth.

Push to gain new members.

Engage Membership Committee on how to bring in new younger members.

Finance Committee Recommendations to the Board:

- 1) Capital Campaign should not begin until after the parking lot issue is resolved and paid for (wait until Spring 2016?)
 - Planned giving about elevator can start quietly
- 2) Spend the money for the retaining wall analysis/cost estimate
- 3) Fix the roof leak(s)
- 4) Get Endowment/Planned Giving going to enhance long-term financial strength!
- 5) Revisit changing fiscal year to July 1st to June 30th – this will improve quality of pledge estimate
- 6) FY15 budget should reflect a conservative stance
 - work to create an operating reserve
 - work to create a building capital reserve
 - budget on 95% rather than 100% of pledge income

What are terms and restrictions on the \$20K Chalice Lighter grant?

-- What is the timeline on these funds?

Budget Preparation

- Send out budget requests by Feb 1
- Must return by Feb 28, or budget set to 0
- Meet early March to put together budget
- Propose flatline (fixed costs growing by inflation + same non-fixed costs)

Thoughts for enhancing the rentability of the social hall:

- 1) Another painting party to spiff up the social hall?
- 2) Buy storage container or shed and put on parking lot (after repairs) to move the chairs out